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INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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SEPT 5

CINCPAC FOR POLAD.

SUBJ: CA ELECTIONS: DELTA PROVINCES OF KIEN GIANG, CHUONG THIEN AND BA XUYEN.

REF: EMBASSY AIRGRAMS 69 AND 93.

KIEN GIANG:

1. OFFICIALS IN KIEN GIANG STILL STATE THAT VC WILL DISRUPT ELECTION BUT NOW SAY DISRUPTION POSSIBLE ONLY IN ISOLATED AREAS (TO SAY OTHERWISE WOULD BE REFLECTION ON SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS). HOWEVER, A DISTRICT HQ WAS MINED AND GRENADED LAST WEEK AND ALTHOUGH PROVINCE CHIEF SAYS INCIDENT NOT NECESSARILY ELECTION TERRORISM, JUSPAO REP REPORTS PUBLIC APPEARS CONCERNED.

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2. PROVINCIAL COUNCIL CHAIRMAN NGUYEN VAN KHOA STILL FRONT RUNNER FOR VIETNAMESE SEAT. HOWEVER, ONE OF TWO CATHOLIC CANDIDATES WITHDREW (REPORTEDLY BECAUSE PRIEST DECIDED HE HAD NO CHANCE). CHANCES OF REMAINING CATHOLIC, ELDERLY NGUYEN VAN NINH, ARE THEREBY IMPROVED.

3. ALTHOUGH SPEECHES ARE INTENDED TO INTRODUCE CANDIDATES AND PROVIDE PEOPLE WITH BASIS FOR DECISION, THEY PROBABLY HAVING LITTLE EFFECT ON OUTCOME BECAUSE FEW PEOPLE ATTEND. AUDIENCES EMBOFF SAW AVERAGED ABOUT

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200 PERSONS, PERHAPS BECAUSE TALKS HELD DURING WORKING HOURS. FURTHER, NUMEROUS CANDIDATES TALING IN SUCCESSION APPEAR TO CONFUSE VOTERS OR OUTLAST THEIR SPAN OF ATTENTION. EMBOFF OBSERVED MANY MEMBERS OF CROWD DRIFTING IN AND OUT AND NOT LISTENING. IT APPEARS LIKELY THAT SOME VOTING IN COUNTRYSIDE WILL BE DETERMINED BY VOTERS' PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE OF CANDIDATE BUT THAT MUCH MORE WILL BE RESULT OF RELIGION, ADVICE OF VILLAGE ELDERS OR OFFICIALS, OR SIMPLY GUESSING AT BALLOT BOX.

4. DURING SPEECHES OF VIETNAMESE CANDIDATES, LY THANH LE DREW A RISE FROM THE CROWD BY SAYING THAT HE HAD

DECIDED TO RUN BECAUSE THOSE ELECTED PREVIOUSLY HAD DONE NOTHING, A DIRECT SLAP AT KHOA. LE IS SUPPORTED BY TEACHERS AND "INTELLECTUALS" AND HAS GOOD FAMILY CONNECTIONS IN KIEN GIANG. HE HAS EMERGED AS A MAJOR CHALLENGER TO KHOA, WHOM LE CALLS "GOVERNMENT CANDIDATE".

5. TWO HOA HAO CANDIDATES (AIR-69) HAVE BEEN REFUSED MILITARY LEAVE TO CAMPAIGN. ONE WITHDREW, OTHER HAS FRIENDS CAMPAIGNING. NEITHER NGUYEN THUAN HUN, WHO REMAINS, OR HOA HAO CIVILIAN DO THANH PHONG IS GIVEN MUCH CHANCE.

6. DANH THU STILL LEADING CAMBODIAN CANDIDATE. OF HIS FIVE OPPONENTS HE FEARS ONLY KIM NGAN, WHO MAY GET CATHOLIC VOTE. THU BELIEVES NGAN IS GOVERNMENT CANDIDATE BECAUSE HE WORKS IN OFFICE KIM KHANH, IV CORPS CAMBODIAN AFFAIRS OFFICER. BUT KIM KHANH TOLD EMBOFF THAT NGAN HAS LITTLE CHANCE. (KHANH'S PREDICTIONS OF WINNING CAMBODIAN CANDIDATES THROUGHOUT DELTA MATCH THOSE IN AIR 93 AND 94.)

7. ALTHOUGH GVN PRINTING SOME ELECTION MATERIAL IN CAMBODIAN, CAMBODIAN CANDIDATES MUST CAMPAIGN IN VIETNAMESE. AS A RESULT SOME LAUGHED AT AS THEY STUMBLE THROUGH SPEECHES. INFORMAL POLITICKING IS OF COURSE CARRIED ON IN CAMBODIAN.

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CHUONG THIEN:

8. NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOTERS HAS INCREASED TO 46,500. THERE REMAIN 2,000 PERSONS IN NEWLY PACIFIED AREAS WHO COULD NOT BE REGISTERED IN TIME. THERE IS RUMOR THAT VC WILL INCITE THIS GROUP TO COMPLAIN ON ELECTION DAY, BUT PROVINCE CHIEF SAYS HE IS NOT WORRIED. HOWEVER, HE HAS LOWERED HIS ESTIMATE OF TURNOUT TO 70 PERCENT BECAUSE HE EXPECTS VC ANTI-ELECTION ACTIVITY TO INCREASE IN FINAL WEEK.

9. CANDIDATES LY NGAN HUE AND NGUYEN VAN TAN HAVE EXPRESSED FEARS THAT HOA HAO CANDIDATE DANG VAN CONG WILL USE HOA HAO REGIONAL FORCE COMPANIES TO STUFF BALLOT BOXES. HOWEVER, DEPUTY FOR ADMINISTRATION THINKS THIS UNLIKELY.

BA XUYEN:

10. SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN BA XUYEN ELECTORAL PICTURE. PROMINENT CANDIDATE NGUYEN DUC HUU ACCUSED OF PREMATURE CAMPAIGNING, WITHDREW RATHER THAN RISK FORFEITURE OF DEPOSIT WHEN LOCAL JUDGE DECIDED TO DELAY RULING ON HIS CASE UNTIL AFTER ELECTION. IF HUU HAD GOT FAVORABLE DECISION NOW HE WOULD HAVE STAYED IN RACE. JUDGE NOTED THAT MOST CANDIDATES STARTED EARLY BUT THAT ONLY

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HUU MADE MISTAKE OF PRINTING CAMPAIGN LETTER, WHICH WOULD BE SOLID EVIENCE AGAINST HIM.

11. ANOTHER CANDIDATE, ARVN CAPTAIN NGUYEN DAT DAN, ALSO SEEMS TO BE ON WAY OUT. DEPUTY FOR ADMINISTRATION SAID DAN LISTED OCCUPATION AS SECTOR CHIEF OF STAFF BUT IS ALSO A DEPUTY COMMANDER OF REGIONAL AND POPULAR FORCES IN THE PROVINCE AND THUS INELIGIBLE. DAN SAYS HE CEASED BEING RF/PF COMMANDER FOUR MONTHS AGO AND FURTHER LAW IS NOT CLEAR ON ELIGIBILITY OF RF/PF COMMANDERS. (TO EMBOFF'S KNOWLEDGE, DAN IS STILL RF/PF DEPUTY COMMANDER IN BA XUYEN.) DAN CLAIMS THAT GVN SUPPORTS CANDIDATE DR. NGUYEN HUYUH DIEU, LST LT. ARVN MEDICAL CORPS, WHO ISSUED COMPLAINT AGAINST HIM.

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ALSO CHARGES THAT JUDGE OFFERED HIM MONEY TO WITH-DRAW; SINCE HE REFUSED, GVN NOW TRYING TO FORCE HIM OUT. HE INTENDS TO WAIT FOR DISQUALIFICATION BUT UNLIKE OTHER CANDIDATES DID NOT RECORD CAMPAIGN BROADCASTS. DAN SAYS HE WILL ASK MILITARY SUPPORTERS AND CATHOLICS TO VOTE FOR ANOTHER CANDIDATE, POSSIBLY CAO VAN BAY. (LOCAL CATHOLIC PRIEST SAID CATHOLICS

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ALL FOR DAN AND WILL NOT KNOW HOW TO VOTE IF HE WITH-DRAWS. SOME MAY NOT VOTE.) IF BAY PICKS UP DAN'S SUPPORT HE WOULD BE A MAJOR CHALLENGER TO DR. DIEU.

12. SON THI STILL APPEARS TO BE LEADER OF CAMBODIAN RACE. NOW THAT DAN IS OUT OF THE RACE THI IS HARD PUT TO DECIDE WHETHER TO SIDE WITH BAY OR DR. DIEU. HIS REMARKS SUGGEST HE MAY SIDE WITH BAY, WHICH BAY STATES HAS ALREADY HAPPENED. LODGE

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